

The History Of
Tabernacle Methodist Church
Poquoson, Virginia

By

The Historical Committee

William Howard Verser, Chairman

Margaret Freeman Forrest

Carrie Freeman Hawkins

Carrie White Moore

John Thomas Amory, Jr.

Thomas Vincent Watkins

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PREFACE

This History of the organization of Tabernacle Methodist Episcopal Church was written upon the premise that any event isolated from its context is no more than a statistical document of facts and figures. The foundation of Tabernacle Methodist Church was more than mere statistics, and in order to realize its place in the order of time, it is necessary to know what is implicit in its creation. This historical event was created by a cause more real to the founders than to us; a result of a need more real to its originators than to the recipients of a hundred and fifty years later. The sociological conditions of the period in which Tabernacle was formed are more like that of ancient Rome than of our time.

In order to show how important this new light was, it is necessary to explore the darkness which surrounded it. Therefore, we must begin by reviewing the times, events and needs that led to the creation of our Church. With this purpose in mind it is the hope that the committee has been successful in such a way that it will glorify rather than merely report the past of Tabernacle Methodist Church.

William Howard Verser, Chairman
Margaret Freeman Forrest
Carrie Freeman Hawkins
Carrie White Moore
John Thomas Amory, Jr.
Thomas Vincent Watkins,

DEDICATION

To the Congregation, past, present, and future, of Tabernacle Methodist Church.

Fortunate was Tabernacle to discover a group of men who had the Faith, Fortitude, and Courage to build for her a Dwelling Place.

Fortunate has been her Congregation, who, for one hundred and fifty years, has found in her a Mighty Fortress.

"Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it; except the Lord keep the City, the watchman waketh but in vain."

Chapter One

The Origin and Development of Methodism

Late in the year 1729, at the University of Oxford, England, a group of four young students united themselves together for the purpose of improving their scholarship and securing discipline in their daily living. The names of these four young men were: John Wesley, Charles Wesley, Robert Kirkham, and William Morgan. In order to improve their minds and to enrich their souls, these young men agreed to spend three or four evenings during the week together in reading the Greek Testament, the Greek and Latin classics, and on Sundays, they discussed and studied theology. They adopted a set of rules for holy living which included the exact observance of all the duties set forth in the Prayer Book of the English Church along the rules that they themselves thought proper and necessary for a well-disciplined life. As a result of these endeavors, they were called "Methodists", a term of derision imposed by fellow-students due to the clock-work of their daily lives.

The real significance of the efforts of these men can only be evaluated by a proper analysis of the conditions of the times in which Methodism was born. It was during the third year of the reign of King George II that these early Methodists banded together. This was the age of money. There was nothing which could not be bought or sold. It was a time when every sixth house in London was a gin-shop where a man could get drunk for a penny, dead drunk for two pence with a pallet of straw to lie in while getting sober. Along with the squalid conditions of the

streets of London, there was the curse of ignorance among the common people. As for the law, it was plenteous enough but justice was scarce indeed.

The prisons were full; there was a public hanging at least once a week; the gateway of London Bridge was decorated with the heads of decapitated traitors. All of this to frighten the people into good behavior.

Where was the Church in all of this? England had always had a Spiritual Church, but in 1729, the Church IN England had become the Church OF England. It was political and hardly served the common man at all. The Universities with all their splendor of architecture, endowment and scholarship had fallen into a state of intellectual and moral stagnation. In the very year that the young "Methodists" banded together, Oxford University issued a notice denouncing the spread of open deism among the students and urged them to be more urgently instructed in theology. How was this to be done? Not by a reformation, only by a spiritual revival.

The Methodist revival was a Gift from Heaven, since there was nothing in England at the time of George II to produce it,-- nothing, that is, except the need. Viewed from this aspect, we must not think of Methodism as being founded by John Wesley, but rather that Methodism found John Wesley: "first ankle deep, then rising to the knees, then to the loins, and finally waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over." This was the origin of the miracle of the Methodist revival that began in England in 1729 -- that it began IN Heaven, touched and warmed

the heart of John Wesley. This miracle spread across the ocean and found fertile soil in the New Nation at a time when it was needed most.

The Westley (or Wesley) Family

The Westley family was one of great respectability in the south of England, going back as far as the fourteenth century. In almost every generation there is found an eminent clergyman and scholar. With the rise of Charles II to the English throne, we find one Bartholomew Westley ejected from his "livings". John Westley, his son and grandfather of the founder of Methodism, was educated for the priesthood at the University of Oxford. During the Protectorate under Cromwell, he became the minister of Whitchurch, a small market town in Shropshire. However, with the Restoration of the throne and the re-establishment of the episcopal form of Church Government, he was denounced as one of Cromwell's Puritans, and carried off to prison at Blandford. He preached his farewell sermon on the Sunday before the "Act of Uniformity" was to go into effect (24 August 1662) and became an outcast and wanderer, reaching a premature death about 1670.

Samuel Westley, his son was also a clergyman. In 1690 he was ordained as deacon in the Established Church. He was also Rector of the parish of Epworth in Lincolnshire where he lived most of his life. Here it was that his two famous sons were born. He married Susanna Annesley, the youngest daughter of Reverend Samuel Annesley, LL.D., also a Non-conformist. Susanna, his daughter, had studied the controversy between the Established Church and the Dissenters, and became a friend of the Dissenters.

Thus it appears that the great religious leader, John Wesley, by divine purpose, should not only inherit a strong personal opinion which was the outcome of English Nonconformity, but that he should be born and reared within the bosom of the Established Church, a fact that must be remembered in the study of Methodism.

In the year 1689 the Reverend Samuel Wesley and Susanna Annesley were married. It was about this time that the Reverend Samuel Wesley dropped the "t" out of the family name. There were in all eighteen or nineteen children of this marriage, ten of which grew to maturity. John Wesley was born 17 June 1703; Charles Wesley was born 18 December 1708. In the year 1720, as a youth of seventeen, John was admitted to Christ Church College, Oxford and became a scholar of high esteem, especially for his skill in logic. This, in brief, is the ancestry of John Wesley, whose life is a legend in the annals of Methodist history. The following is from "Illustrated History of Methodism" by Reverend W. H. Daniels, A.M. published in 1879 page 343:

"About ten o'clock on the morning of Wednesday, March 2, 1791, after a brief season of prostration, but without any disease or pain, in the full use of his senses, and in the glorious triumph of the faith he had preached so long and so well, John Wesley passed from the world of the dying to the world of the living".

There is in Westminster Abbey, a marble medallion profile of John Wesley and his brother Charles with suitable inscriptions as follows:

John Wesley M. A. born June 17 1703 died March 2 1791.
Charles Wesley born December 18 1708 died March 29 1788.

"I look upon all the world as my parish"

"God buries his workmen but carries on his work"

Chapter Two

A Religious Battlefield

Contrary to the saying that America was founded for religious freedom, nothing could be further from the truth, especially in the southern colonies and particularly Virginia. While the Puritans who could find no refuge in England, came to New England as an escape, and founded there an empire of religious freedom, Anglicanism, by virtue (or by vice) of its political and social status in England, merely transplanted itself in most of the southern colonies. In case a Puritan migrated from New England into the colony of Virginia, and as the early records will show, some of them did, they were abused, persecuted and censured severely under such guises as absency from Church attendance, false moral conduct and lack of willingness to receive "instruction".

Throughout Colonial times, the Anglican Church had been closely allied with the government. In Virginia there were "bigoted churchmen, who neither preached the gospel themselves, nor allowed others to preach it. Numbers of Cavaliers and loyal gentry flocked to the Old Dominion, where toasts to the health of Charles II were offered long before the Restoration and where the Act of Toleration which allowed freedom of worship to Protestant dissenters who took the oaths of allegiance, was not accepted until fifty years after William and Mary had been crowned."*

* "A History of Methodism". McTyeire. Southern Methodist Pub. 1884
Page 250.

By 1784, twenty-three out of ninety-five Parish Churches in Virginia had become extinct.* The time was ripe for Methodism in the southern colonies; Methodism, by this time, offered what the distraught colonists needed. One is overwhelmed by the rush of events immediately after the Revolutionary War. Briefly stated, the following are a few events that helped establish Methodism in America before, during and after the Revolutionary War:

Robert Strawbridge, an Irishman who came to America about the year 1760, settled on Sam's Creek in the woods of Maryland, and there built a log-cabin in which he preached Free Grace as he had experienced it in a Methodist meeting in his homeland.

The preaching of the first sermon in America by Philip Embury in New York in 1766.

The distinction of preaching the first Methodist sermon in Baltimore belongs to John King, who soon fell in with Strawbridge and both men traveled and preached together.

The First Methodist Conference in America at Philadelphia on 14 July 1773.

The famous "Christmas" Conference at Lovely Lane Chapel in Maryland 24 December 1784.

The change from English rule and domination of the Colonies to the Post-Revolutionary form of self-government came swiftly -- within the span of one generation. It came so swiftly that a sort of apathy prevailed with economic chaos. The landed

* "An Illustrated History of Methodism". Rev. W.H. Daniels A.M. Methodist Book Concern. 1879. See also History of Methodism by Hubberd N. McTyeire DD 1884, page 319.

proprietorships of the feudalistic Cavaliers which had taken more than a century and a half to build, suddenly found themselves selling out tenement after tenement, until finally nothing was left but the plantation mansion house without means of supporting it. The life of the Colonial Cavalier had come to an end.

Evidences of some of these Colonial brick mansions have persisted even into the twentieth century. Here in Poquoson there were such colonial plantations: a beautiful brick mansion house planted on a knoll overlooking a waterway, surrounded with other smaller houses. Spread over the open land were other smaller houses known as "tenements" in which tenants and sons lived who labored on the plantation. With the collapse of Colonialism in Virginia, these plantations were cut off from trade with the homeland. Their economic status collapsed.

This is the condition in which the "lower precinct" of York County, Virginia found itself. To make matters even worse, there was another threat of war with Britain, which seemed to the inhabitants of the Eastern Seaboard to be imminent. Many of the people from the Eastern Shore of Maryland and Virginia, eager to escape the harassment of shipping and possible attack, moved across the Bay to the Western Shore, especially to Mathews and Gloucester, as well as York County, Hampton and Norfolk. These were the people who bought the tenements of the Colonial plantation owners.

They brought their religion with them -- and most of them were Methodists, having been born and raised in an area rich in Methodist history. This happened in the sections of York County

known in Colonial times as Poquoson, Crab and Fish Neck, which sections comprised the Charles Church Parish, or known in the beginning as the New Poquoson Parish.

When Lord Cornwallis surrendered his sword to General George Washington at Yorktown on 19 October 1781, it signified the end of hostilities on the battlefield, and assured the success of the revolt against English domination of the Colonies in America. As a result of this gain, however, other battlefields were opened, the struggles of the Colonial Parish Churches to maintain themselves, and the struggles of the new religious sects to gain footholds in the society of the New Democracy.

It seems ironic that two of these religious battlefields were so near the field of battle at Yorktown. One was in Kingston Parish in Mathews; the other in the Parish of Charles Church in the "lower precinct" of York County. The Colonial Anglican Church in the lower precinct of York County was known as the "Church of the New Poquoson" mentioned in the Court records as early as 1645* and re-named "Charles Church" in 1692. The history of this Parish Church throughout Colonial days had always been a tumultuous one.

Soon after 1784 a petition addressed to the Speaker and Members of the General Assembly in the Commonwealth of Virginia by members of the "Protestant Episcopal Church in the Parish of Charles, in the County of York", requesting that the Act passed by the State Legislature earlier in the year, "whereby the

* "Colonial Churches of Tidewater Va." George C. Mason Page 230

members of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the State be allowed to make its own laws and rules for their Ecclesiastical Government.....and finding themselves happy under such an act, are justly alarmed at an intention that sundry plaintiffs are intending to be present to your Honorable House in your next session for a repeal of the said act.

"As your petitioners cannot see any injustice in the said act, or any partiality in favor of them in particular, or conceive how any other denomination of Christians can be injured or oppressed by its operation, your petitioners therefore humbly pray that it may not be repealed."*

The signers of this petition were names of the families whose ancestors had long been faithful to Charles Church since its establishment in the seventeenth century. Some of the descendants of these signers were to become staunch members of Baptists and Methodists due to circumstances that were more economic than political or religious.

The names of the signers of this petition were:

Thomas Hunt	Thomas Holloway	Thomas C. Patrick
John Chisman	Robert Sherrington	Mary Langstone
Jo. Hunter	Edward Catilla	Thomas Cox
Robert Armistead	Edward Berry	Richard Colbert
Francis Mennis	John Gemiell	James Holloway
Wm. Mallory	Abraham Catilla	Gerrard Roberts
Lucy Roberts	Robert Preston	Robert Kelso
Martha Patrick	Ann Cook	William Howard
Edmund Curtis	Elizabeth Wise	John Robinson
Thomas Minson	Elizabeth Hansford	Richard Brown
Jo. Giles	Vincent Rawlings	Willis Wilson
Joseph Davenport	M. M. Robinson	William Davenport

By 1800 Charles Church was abandoned and fell victim to fire sometime between 1800 and 1818.* *The flame of destruction was

* A Photographic copy of the Petition of 1784, Va. State Library.

ignited by the spark which set off a second threat of war with Great Britain -- the blockade of the Virginia Capes and the Eastern Seaboard of Virginia in 1813. An interesting account of the events leading to the Battle at Hampton on 25 June 1813** states: "4th of February 1813 the British Squadron Admiral: Sir John Borlase Warren, of two ships of the line & four frigates--blockaded the Capes of Virginia. On February 8th, nine barges capture off Back River a Baltimore letter of Marque-- Capt. Southcomb mortally wounded in the engagement."

The paper continues with an account of the Battle at Hampton on 25 June 1813. In this same article there is contained the roll of Capt. Samuel Sheild's Company of Light Infantry, taken at Hampton on 25 June 1813. In the roll are to be found the names of the heroes of this Battle who thought they were fighting to save the area around Hampton from attack by the British. The roll is rather detailed in that it gives the names, birth-places and even heights of the men. Many of these men were new-comers to the area, and were to play a big part in establishing Methodism in York County. The following is the list:

Sgt. Aaron Tennis, native of Maryland (wounded)
Sgt. Curtis Hunt, native of York Co. (wounded)
Sgt. Peter Manson, native of York Co.
Sgt. John Patrick, native of York Co.
Corp. John Sheild, native of York Co.
Corp. Carter Longest, native of King & Queen Co. (killed)
Corp. John Hay, native of York Co.
Corp. John Drwery, native of York Co.
William Bohannon, drummer, native of Gloucester Co.
John Bowen, fifer, native of York Co.
Thomas Pescud, native of York Co. (wounded)
Ro(e) Boutwell, native of York Co.
Tyler Crockett, native of Accomac Co. (killed)

** "Colonial Churches of Tidewater Va. George C. Mason p 232

*** Va. Mag. Hist. Vol XXXVII p 11

John Moss,	native of York Co.
George Elliott,	native of York Co.
Jesse Robbins,	native of Mathews Co.
Edward Mason,	native of York Co.
Typee L. Charles,	native of York Co.
William Topping,	native of York Co.
John Bohannon,	native of Gloucester Co.
John Charles,	native of York Co.
James Martin,	native of _____ (killed)
Thomas Minson,	native of York Co.
Vincent Rollings,	native of York Co.
Thomas Cox,	native of York Co.
Smith Bunting,	native of Accomac Co.
Henry Bohannon,	native of Gloucester Co.
Benjamin Phillips,	native of York Co.
John Hunt,	native of York Co.
John Wainwright,	native of York Co.
John Powell,	native of Mathews Co.
Robert Dawson,	native of _____
Thomas Wilson,	native of Northampton Co.
Elias Chisman,	native of York Co.
David Hopkins,	native of Maryland
Peter Holloway,	native of York Co.
James Holloway,	native of York Co.
Richard Callis,	native of _____
Richard H. Manson,	native of York Co.
Armiger Parsons,	native of York Co. (killed)
Thomas Davis,	native of Gloucester Co.
Edward Moreland,	native of York Co.
John Mallicote,	native of Warwick Co.
Luther Bunting,	native of Accomac Co.
Whitty Crockett,	native of Accomac Co.
Thomas Watkins,	native of _____
Thomas Parsons,	native of York Co. (wounded)

Of the forty-seven names above, twenty-eight of these were descendants from families that had been connected with the Charles Church in Colonial times. The other nineteen were immigrants to the area from Maryland, Accomac and Northampton Counties on the Eastern Shore, Mathews County, Gloucester County and Warwick County. This latter group brought with them Methodism.

From the foregoing account of events, it is clear that the religious battle between the adherents to Charles Church and the "other Christian denominations" was decided in a unified

struggle by both factions in maintaining and preserving their personal rights so recently obtained for them by their fathers on the battlefield at Yorktown. The result was that of all the Colonial Churches in the area, Bruton, Abingdon, Ware, Kingston, York and Elizabeth City, Charles Church in lower York County, was the only one to die. Also, that within the Charles Church Parish, was to emerge the oldest continuous Methodist Church: Tabernacle Methodist Episcopal Church in Poquoson, Virginia.

Chapter Three

The Beginnings of Methodism in Poquoson, York County, Virginia

On the Eastern Shore, at the Lovely Lane Chapel on the 24th of December 1784, the first American General Conference was held.* This has come to be known as the famous "Christmas Conference". At this General Conference many organizational matters were settled. As one writer expressed it: "of course they left undone some things which afterward had to be done, and they did some things which later had to be undone."*

The years 1805 and 1806 were prosperous for Methodism, for on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, more than 1,000 persons were converted at a camp meeting which lasted five days and nights.** As a result of this, Methodism spread quickly to the Western side of the Bay and it came at a very crucial time: the threat of War again with Great Britain, and the collapse of the Colonial Church. That it found fertile ground upon which to grow is proven by the organization of a Methodist Church in Poquoson, York County in the year 1817.

Deed 11 March 1817

This indenture made this eleventh day of March in the Year of Our Lord one thousand eight hundred and seventeen between Mrs. Elizabeth Carmign of the County of York and State of Virginia, of the one part, George Topping, Abraham Dennis, John Dennis, Smith Bunting, Cyrus B. James, Trustees in Trust for the use and purpose herein after mentioned, all of the County of York in the State aforesaid, of the other part; witnesseth that the said Elizabeth Carmign for and in consideration of the sum of seven dollars and a half specie to her in hand paid, at, and upon the sealing and delivery of these presents, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, hath give, granted, bargained, sold, released,

* History of Methodism. McTyeire. Page 352

** IBID.

confirmed and conveyed and by these presents doth give, grant, bargain, sell, release, confirm and convey unto them the said George Topping, Abraham Dennis, John Dennis, Smith Bunting and Cyrus B. James, and their successors, Trustees in Trust, for the uses and purposes herein after mentioned and declared, all the estate, right, title, interest, property, claim and demand whatsoever, either in law or equity which she the said Elizabeth Carmign hath in, to, or upon all and singular, a certain lot or piece of ground situate, lying, and being in the County of York and State aforesaid, bounded and butted as follows; to-wit: on the North by the main road, one acre in length, on the West a half acre in width by Mr. Absalom Cox's land, on the South one acre in length by the said Mrs. Carmign's; then North to the beginning place, containing and laid out for a half acre of ground together with all and singular Houses, Woods, Water Ways, Privileges and Appurtenances thereto unto them the said George Topping, Abraham Dennis, John Dennis, Smith Bunting and Cyrus B. James and their successors in office, forever in trust, that they shall erect and build a House or Place of Worship for the use of the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America according to the rules and discipline which from time to time may be agreed upon and adopted by the ministers and preachers of the said Church at their General Conference in the United States of America; and in further trust and confidence that they shall at all times forever hereafter permit such ministers and preachers belonging to the said Methodist Episcopal Church, or by the yearly Conferences, they to preach and expound God's Holy Word therein; and the said Elizabeth Carmign doth by these presents warrant and forever defend all and singular the before mentioned and described lot or piece of ground with the appurtenances unto them the said George Topping, Abraham Dennis, John Dennis, Smith Bunting and Cyrus B. James and their successors in office forever from the claim or claims of all persons whatsoever. In testimony whereof the said Elizabeth Carmign has set her hand and seal the day and date above written.

Sealed and delivered in the presence of us

Absalom Cox
Roe Boutwell
Robert White
John Powell
William Wilson

Elizabeth Carmens

At court held for York County the 20th Day of October 1817, this indenture was proved by the oaths of Roe Boutwell, John Powell and William Wilson, witnesses thereto, and the receipt thereto annexed, being proved by the oath of said Roe Boutwell, a witness to the same, were ordered to be recorded.*

Teste: Sam Sheild, CYC

* York Deed Book 8 p 398

This indenture of the gift of land to the Trustees of Trust, constitutes the establishment of Tabernacle Methodist Episcopal Church on the 20th day of October 1817. A House of Worship was built upon this lot, according to tradition it was called the "First Church". At a Quarterly Conference held at Providence on 14 July 1855, the Building Committee of Tabernacle was invested with authority to sell the old Church.**

** Minutes of Book of the York and Warwick Circuit.

Note: The mis-spelling of the name Carmines is due to the newness of the name in the area. The same is true of Dennis which turns out to be Tennis. This is due to the fact that spelling was phonetic.



TABERNACLE IN 1884: THE THIRD BUILDING



TABERNACLE IN 1912

Chapter Four

The Early Years

With the establishment of Tabernacle Methodist Episcopal Church at Poquoson in 1817, the battle between Charles Church and the early Methodists had ended. Very little is known about the struggle, except the petition from Charles Church in 1784 which is given elsewhere in this history. In this document the Charles Church is called "Protestant Episcopal" perhaps a term intended to include persons of all beliefs. The Methodists emerged as an Episcopal Church, and in its efforts to establish an Episcopacy, a great deal of planning and organizing went on behind the scenes in the Methodist Church, while the efforts to make the Anglican Church more "Protestant" evidently led to doctrinal disputes among its own group. Then too, there was the political element; there were the British sympathizers who expected a return to Colonialism and who would not consent to any sort of Protestant compromise. When the British failed in their attempt at Hampton in 1813, this was the fatal blow. During this period, the Methodists were seeking ways and means of making itself stronger. Prior to 1784, the Methodists were in close communion with the American section of the English Church relying upon the friendly clergy of that Church to perform the sacraments of Baptism, Communion and Marriage. The Methodists, during this period had not a single ordained minister among themselves. However, in 1784 America had emerged as a nation and the active and growing Societies could no longer remain in close communion with a Church which was

the creature of a foreign and hostile State. Something had to be done for the fifteen thousand Methodists in America in order to establish their rights and privileges as members of the Church of God. This led to the establishment of the Methodist Episcopacy. What this meant was that in order to perform the sacraments, the ministers in the field had to be officially ordained.

John Wesley was a Presbyterian in the Church of England which gave him the right to ordain. And so he set about to ordain several men to be sent over to America for the purpose of legitimately ordaining the ministers already in the field.*

The validity of such ordination was questioned most of all by the clergy of the English Church and the Courts. To show how the Methodist Society in York County overcame this obstacle, we are fortunate in having several Court records to prove the validity of Episcopacy in the early years.

The New Poquoson Parish Church (later called Charles Church) was one of the few Colonial Churches whose Birth and Death Registers have been preserved from its beginnings, and almost complete. However, the Marriage Register, along with the Vestry Minutes were lost. It was the writer's good fortune to discover in the Guardian Book of 1780-1823 in the York Court, several sheets of recorded data containing detailed description of slaves, and a list of marriages "celebrated" by the last three known Rectors of Charles Church. The rectors were Rev. Samuel Shield, Rector in York-Hampton Parish 1786-1790 and Rector of Charles Church from 1791 to 1793.** Also, Rev. Thomas Camm, who according to the

* History of Methodism. W.H. Daniels, A.M. p 467-486.

** Charles Parish Registers. Landon C. Bell p 28.

record found in the Guardian Book was "Rector of Charles Parish from 3 June 1794 to January 1798."

The date of this record is given as the 7th day of July 1785 with the closing dates left blank. These sheets are definitely among the last records of the Charles Church and were either originals or copies that were not sent to the Secretary's Office as was the custom, but left in the Court for safe-keeping. This list of marriages is the only marriage record that has been found of the Charles Church.

On these pages are to be found also the very first marriages from the Methodist Society performed by Methodist Ministers. This shows that the Ministers of the Methodist Church had been ordained and were performing the sacraments at the dates specified.

The first Methodist Marriage from Tabernacle Methodist Episcopal Church is found here and it reads:

I, Thacker Muire, Minister on regular communion with the Methodist Episcopal Church, do certify that I did this day, celebrate the rites of matrimony agreeable to the forms and customs of the said Church, between Butts Roberts and Miss Nancy Robinson, both of the County of York. Given under my hand this 29th day of May 1816.

Thacker Muire

"On regular communion" would signify that he was an ordained Minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Also, that he was in no way connected with the Charles Church. Here is the first statement proving the validity and authority of Methodism in York County, Virginia.

However, there were some communicants who probably insisted on their marriage being performed by the Rector, for the following marriages were performed by the Rev. Thomas Camm:

Aaron Dennis and Polly Roberts	19 Nov. 1796
John Tennis and Frances Dixon	30 Dec. 1797
Armiger Parsons and Elizabeth Holloway	3 June 1794
Absalom Cox and Rachael Phillips	6 Nov. 1798
Henry C. Freeman and Elizabeth Presson	13 Feb. 1800
John Drewry and Elizabeth Boutwell	4 Dec. 1800
John Moore and Elizabeth Wright	25 May 1801

Here are more "Methodist" marriages found in the same list:

George Cox and Elizabeth Holloway, 17 May 1819,
married by Francis A. Ward, M.M.E.C. a licensed
minister of the Gospel.

It appears from the above that the Court had by now required Ministers to be licensed.

Joshua Featherstone, a licensed minister of the Gospel, York County, performed the following marriages:
18 May 1819, William Emory and Elizabeth Dewbree.
13 July 1819, Smith Bunting and Nancy Topping.

On 7 February 1823, the marriage of John Freeman to Martha Watkins was performed by Waddil Johnson. He was Minister in Charge on the Circuit at that time.

The entry of all of these marriages on the same page with those of the Parish Church Records, proves that Methodism had, by 1817, established itself in the eyes of the Court of York County and in the hearts of its constituents. Thus, the problem of Episcopacy had been solved, and Methodism was now a vital element in the Colonial Parish of The New Poquoson (Charles Parish).

Another record found in York Order Book No. 9: page 308:

17 August 1818: On the motion of Caleb Fisher and Robert Gibbons, it is ordered that the society of Baptists and that of the Methodists whenever they see fit, be permitted to use the Courthouse of this County for religious purposes, so that in such use the Courts of this County or the Superior Courts shall not be interrupted or disturbed during the sessions of said Courts, and provided they repair any damages done to said Courthouse arising from the use of it by them.

It is unfortunate that the records of Tabernacle Methodist Episcopal Church from its foundings in 1817 to 1852 have been lost. There must have been a record kept of the proceedings of the Church previous to that which begins so abruptly in the year 1852. Cyrus B. James was the recording steward in 1852. He also kept a diary which contains detailed data on the weather, tides and hurricanes but no mention is made of the Church. He bought land in Poquoson on 20th October 1835: "bounded on the north by a branch of Bennett's creek, east by the lands of Butts Roberts, south by the land of Hind Holloway, west by the lands of Rooksby Roberts and Daniel Carmines." This tract consisted of 60 acres and was deeded by William Holloway, witnessed by John A. White, Daniel Carmines and Josiah Evans. The diary of Cyrus B. James began in the year 1834. This diary appears in full in "A Virginia Genealogy: Thomas James" by Elizabeth Hogg Ironmonger, who spent several days in Chattanooga, Tennessee, copying this diary and who has so graciously given permission for its use here.

One of the "things that had to be undone" as a result of the Discipline presented at the "Christmas" Conference of 1784, was the repeal of the Resolution on slavery. When Bishop Thomas Coke began expounding the doctrine against slave-holding, he became the

victim of scourge imposed by many large and wealthy slave-owners, particularly in the South. There were even some ordained ministers within the Church who owned slaves. The rules on slavery as adopted in 1784 and published in 1785 were very strict on this matter:

"Every member of our Society shall within twelve months emancipate every slave between the ages of forty and forty-five, immediately upon notice given....and all ages in a period of five years thereafter.

"Every assistant shall keep a journal of all the names and ages of all the slaves belonging to all the masters in his respective circuit, together with all instruments executed and recorded with the name of the Court, book and folio in which the said instruments shall be recorded.

"No person holding slaves shall in the future be admitted into the Society or to the supper of the Lord with the Methodist till he complies with the above requisitions. Virginia will be allowed two years to consider compliance or non-compliance with these rules."

The disputes which followed among the clergy and societies became so intense that it was compared to the Civil War "with words and arguments being the weapons instead of firearms and swords." The War of Words ended in a truce called "Plan of Separation", which was an agreement by both sides that a division of the Church was necessary to preserve the Methodist Episcopal Church. The outcome was, that on 1st of May 1845, at the Convention in Louisville, Kentucky, the Methodist Episcopal Church South was born.*

In the Conference Minutes for the year 1845, some Virginia Methodists were now members of the Methodist Episcopal Church South. Tabernacle in Poquoson was one of these.

* Illustrated History of Methodism. Rev. W H Daniels M.A. p 632

Incidentally, there is to be found in Lafferty's "Sketches" 1880 edition, a report that Benjamin F. Woodward, the pastor on York-Warwick Circuit for the year 1845, was conducting a revival on the Circuit from April 1846 to the end of the year. He certainly must have brought the news with him that Methodism was still intact as a whole but split in numbers.

The following is a brief account of Rev. Woodward:

Benjamin F. Woodward, born 23 November 1824, entered the ministry in 1844, served on the York-Warwick from November 1845 to 1846. He married 20 May 1848 Elvira Frances Carmines. Her birth is listed in the Kingston Parish Birth Register in Mathews County, page 180: Elvira Frances Carmines, daughter of Daniel and Hilligan. Born 26 December 1825. There is an obituary on Rev. Woodward in the "Sketches" of Lafferty.

The problem of slavery, so far as the Church was concerned, was solved at least for the next twenty years. The Golden Age of Slavery, (if one may call it that), had begun only to end in tragedy. The slaves were provided for in the Church services and there are no reports to show that nothing less than perfect harmony existed in the Church during this period.

However, there was a more serious problem than slavery that confronted all sections of the County and State as well. It was a problem that had been inherited from Colonial days. There is a petition dated 12 December 1831 by "citizens of the County of York" to the State Legislature asking for legal or financial aid concerning the "class of persons who are neither freemen or slaves." On the jacket of this petition is written "Referred to select committee". While the issue may at one time have been a serious problem, it was short-lived in comparison to what was to follow.

If any action was ever taken, it has not been recorded, and the evidences are still with us and show that nothing ever came of it.

The signers of this petition are made up of an interesting segment of York County as a whole.

According to the diary of Cyrus B. James, on the 24th of August 1850, Poquoson was visited by a tornado that tore down the house of Mrs. Catherine Hudgins killing her daughter, Sarah Margaret, also destroyed the house and killed the wife of John Holloway (Sarah Evans Holloway), and destroyed the house of George Thomas. Much damage was done to property. The path of the tornado seemed to pass over the present site of Tabernacle Church (the third building), however, the Church as it stands now had not been built at this time.

This concludes the first part of the history of Tabernacle Methodist Episcopal Church in Poquoson, Virginia, which Church has been in continuous operation since its establishment in 1817. The second part of the history begins in the year 1852. At this time the Minutes of the York-Warwick Circuit are most complete except for the Civil War years. This Minute book was found in the Parsonage at Grafton in recent years and was copied by Mrs. Elizabeth Hogg Ironmonger, the original having been deposited along with the Roll Book in the Methodist Library at Randolph-Macon College, Ashland, Virginia.

The History of Tabernacle Methodist Episcopal Church

PART TWO 1852-1879

Chapter Five Years of Crisis

In this, the second part of the History of Tabernacle Methodist Church, we are fortunate to have at our disposal certain Church Records that have been referred to previously in this history from the year 1852 to 1879. These records comprise Baptism Registers, Marriage Registers, Church Rolls and Quarterly Conference Minutes for the York and Warwick Circuits. This Circuit included Tabernacle Church, Providence Church, Zion Church and others that pass in and out during the period. Each Church was given a copy of these records, and it is from this book that much of the information contained in this Part are gathered.

The initial Quarterly Conference Meeting was of the first quarter of 1852, held at Tabernacle Church on 7th of February. The Presiding Elder was Robert Jacob Manning and the Associate Elder was George W. Trimyer. The minutes for the year clearly show that everything was in smooth running order, and one gets the impression that such procedures were routine and that the Circuit had been in operation for a long time before. The only list of names for the year 1852 is contained in the Baptism Register as follows:

Theophilus T. Hudgins	Edward T. Dixon	Clara Crockett
John T. Chandler	Sarah J. Davis	William E. Weston
Sarah J. Watkins	Lemuel Robinson	Elvira J. Page
William Hornsbury	John T. Hornsbury	Mary L. Wilson
Rosanna T. Watkins	Lavenia A. Martin	William A. Stroud
Eliza Stroud	Ethelbert Crockett	Marcellus T. Messic
Irella V. Amory	Beunavista Charles	Lucy F. Charles
Rachel C. Starling	Levi T. Riggins	Samuel Cary Phillips

This is the complete list for the Circuit.

According to the Quarterly Conference Minutes for 5 February 1853, there were no Sabbath Schools in Operation on the Circuit during the winter due to "the lowness of the land and the rainy season". In June (25th) there were three Sabbath Schools in Operation on the Circuit and in "flourishing condition".

At the Quarterly Conference of 16 September 1854 the following were appointed to superintend and have erected a House of Worship for the Tabernacle Congregation:

Arthur B. White, Edward Hopkins, William Freeman,
Thomas Dixon and Thomas C. Amory.

On 14 July 1855 the building committee of Tabernacle was invested with authority by the Quarterly Conference to sell the old Church. The New Church (the second building) was erected and completed near the same location as the first in the year 1855. This building contained a balcony which provided the negro slaves an opportunity to attend worship services. This building was destroyed by fire on Christmas Eve of 1883. This was during the ministry of James Morris. In rebuilding the Church, the Trustees decided to change the location. The present Sanctuary contains this the third building. It was built at a cost of \$2,000.

Among the great events for each year was the Camp Meeting. On 2nd of February 1856 committees were appointed to "take in consideration the propriety of holding a camp meeting". From Tabernacle were Thomas Emory, Edward Hopkins and William Page.

The Board of Trustees for Tabernacle were named 6 October 1856

William Page William Freeman Josiah Evans
Thos. C. Emory Edward Hopkins Henry Watkins
William Lawson John Montgomery elected to fill the
place of Bro. Arthur B. White. Elisha Lawson was
elected to fill the place of Bro. Thomas Dixon. They
gave the following report:

We the Trustees of Tabernacle Church met according to
appointment & make the following report, to wit:
Tabernacle Church is in good order and has a full
board of Trustees, and that there is a debt of \$112.00
of which sum we have the amount of fifty dollars
subscribed yet to be collected.

With the advent of the year 1857, we are presented with the
first Roll, the first Marriage Register and the Baptism Register.

Tabernacle Class Roll for Year 1857

Class No. 1 Meets Sabbath Mornings	Class No. 2 Meets Sabbath Mornings
1. Hind Holloway C.L.	1. Edward Hopkins C.L.
2. Cyrus B. James L.E & R.S.	2. Amelia Hopkins
3. Mary James	3. Mary R. Hopkins
4. William Phillips	4. Zella C. Hunt
5. Mary Phillips	5. Polly Freeman
6. Mary A. Carmines	6. Eliza Watkins
7. Mary A. Hunt	7. Major S. Moore
8. Mary E. Revel	8. Henrietta Moore
9. William Lawson	9. Vincent Watkins
10. Ann M. E. Lawson	10. Ann Bunting
11. John Holloway	11. Julianey Page
12. Frances Holloway	12. Ann Hopkins
13. Wm. H.W. White	13. Ketturah Freeman
14. James Hickman	14. David Hopkins
15. Elizabeth C. White	15. Geo. L. Watkins
16. Elisha Lawson	16. Mary C. Hudgins
17. Sophia Lawson	17. Mary F. Topping
18. Sarah E. Cox	18. Wilton Holloway
19. Robert V. Robertson	19. Diannah Holloway
20. Polly Phillips	20. Julia Hopkins
21. Frances Dixon	21. William Page
22. Arrah Jane Phillips	22. Sarah Watkins
23. George Thomas	23. Harriet Topping
24. Horatio E. Cox	24. Euphama Martin
25. Charles Topping	25. Elias Holloway

26. Rachel Cox
27. Silas Cox
28. Sarah Thomas
29. William Freeman
30. Martha Freeman
31. Susan Frances White
32. Harriet Rider
33. Mary E. Cox
34. Mary Phillips
35. Martha

Class No. 3

1. John French White, C.L.
2. Henry Watkins
3. Sarah A. Watkins
4. Ann Insley
5. Margaret Weston
6. Samuel Rollins
7. William Carmines
8. Martha A. Insley
9. Phama Insley
10. Sarah E. Watkins
11. Sarah Ward
12. John H. Ward .
13. Mary Weston
14. Catherine Rollins
15. Arintha S. Watkins
16. Mary C. Hudgins
17. Willie A. Carmines
18. Robert Forrest
19. Solomon Wainwright
20. Joicey Weston
21. William Weston
22. Jenettie W. Weston
23. Benjamin Quinn
24. John Messick
25. Mariah Messick
26. George W. Page
27. Mary Page
28. Emeline Taylor
29. Harriet Rollins
30. Nancy Page
31. Julianey Martin
32. Harriet Insley
33. Mary Insley
34. Rachael Insley
35. Mary A. Wilson
36. Mary A. Insley
37. Frances Winder
38. Matilda Hugget
39. Rebecca J. Quinn
40. Mary V. Bradshaw

26. Mary S. Holloway
 27. John S. Freeman
- Probationers List
1. Mary E. Holloway
 2. Drucilla Banks
 3. Elizabeth Freeman
 4. Joseph Bunting
 5. George R. Cox
 6. William H. Freeman
 7. Henry Watkins

Class No. 4

1. Thomas Freeman, C.L.
2. Elizabeth Freeman
3. Josiah Evans
4. Mary Messick
5. Nancy Evans
6. Sarah Evans
7. William C. Messick
8. Eleanor Messick
9. Ann Martin
10. James Martin
11. Eliza A. Martin
12. Harriet Holloway
13. Thomas C. Amory
14. Jane Amory
15. May J. Martin
16. Elizabeth Pauls
17. William Bradshaw
18. Elizabeth Bradshaw
19. Martha Firman
20. Polly Forrest
21. Brittania Wilson
22. Nancy Insley
23. Milley Insley
24. Nancy Hudgins
25. Mary A. Bradshaw
26. Virginia Bradshaw
27. Edward Bradshaw
28. William J. Bunting
29. William Insley
30. Jane Rollins
31. Martha V. Wainwright

Probationer's List

1. Charlotte Insley
2. John Evans
3. Donnard Insley
4. Jacob Martin
5. Mahala Ensley
6. Charles Firth

Probationer's List

1. John E. Quinn
2. Silvester Forrest
3. William Page, Jr.
4. Joseph Rollins
5. Curtis M. Page
6. Martha H. Forrest
7. Josiah W. Hugget

Probationer's List to Class No. 5

1. Tabitha J. Cullony
2. Sarah E. Wornom
3. Mary R. Phillips
4. Caroline Tennis
5. William Freeman
6. William H. Wornom
7. William W. Frazier
8. John T. Wornom
9. Josiah W. Freeman
10. William Hunt
11. Martha Freeman
12. James Moore
13. Sarah E. Hudgins
14. Salina F. Thomas
15. Joseph H. Cullony
16. Anthony D. Hudgins

Class No. 5

1. John Montgomery C.L.
2. Martha E. Montgomery
3. Thomas Dixon
4. Robinson Phillips
5. Elizabeth A. Phillips
6. Mary E. Moore
7. Ellen V. Dillard
8. Marvella A. Callis
9. Sarah Wright
10. Sam J. Wornom
11. Sarah Riggins
12. Sarah C. Smith
13. Sarah A. Woodley
14. Willis Wilson
15. Elizabeth A. Riggins
16. Sarah Curtis
17. Mary E. Watkins
18. Charlott Riggins
19. Dianah Dawson
20. Rebecca S. Smith
21. Mary E. Callis
22. Martha E. Freeman
23. Martha Riggins
24. Mary S. Johnson
25. Mary E. Freeman

The minutes from 1852 to 1860 give fluctuating accounts of the conditions in the local Churches. Sabbath Schools were in full operation during the Summer months but in the Winter time they closed down, even in spite of the urgencies of the Elder and Preacher in Charge. The Preacher's reports show a wide variety of feelings about the religious conditions in the area. Perhaps it was a reflection of the times, which surely were disturbing to say the least. No reference is made about politics until in the Quarterly Report on October 30, 1861, wherein the Preacher in Charge, George W. Trimyer, reported that in his judgment the state of religion on the Circuit is rather declining owing principally to the present war. The Conference met at Zion in Seaford and no representatives from Tabernacle were present, which might have

been due to conditions on the Peninsula at this time, due to the fact that the Union Army had landed at Fort Monroe and was on its ravaging campaign towards Richmond. The report from Zion was out of debt but in bad condition perhaps due also to the war.

This was the last Quarterly Conference until March 17, 1866. In the Record Book, there is a blank page. This last Quarterly Conference on 30th of October 1861 was the last word we have from the Minutes until four and half years later. While the Church records are strangely silent about what happened during the Peninsula Campaign, there is a vivid account of the area and its condition in a diary written by a clergyman in the Union Army who was with the troops that plodded and plundered its way up the Peninsula. The name of the book is "The Peninsula Campaign in Virginia" by Reverend J. J. Marks, D.D. published by Lippincott in 1864. On page 134 we read: "We left Hampton on the 4th of April (1862) and reached Great Bethel about two P.M. This was the scene of a disastrous battle fought the 10th of June 1861. In this fell the lamented Winthrop, as also the equally gifted Lieutenant Grebel, both of whom were men of the highest promise... Several of the officers with myself, took tea at the house of a poor woman with a family of children, whose husband was in the Confederate Army. She assured us that none of the small farmers, mechanics, and poor people were in favor of the war, but they had been forced into the service. They could not flee the country, and if they refused to obey the conscription, they were thrown into prison and shot. She said that only the rich slaveholders were in favor of the war, but that her husband had ever been opposed to it...

The sufferings of these poor, defenseless, and unprotected families were of a character to awaken the deepest pity; the land was swept of fences, grain, horses, and cattle, and everything they had raised during the summer. There was none to till the fields, and no means of protecting what the women and old men might have planted; and in the Peninsula, during the summer, hundreds of families were destitute and in want. There was nothing left in the country on which they could live."

This account was not an exaggeration. It was in this manner that the Golden Age of Slavery came to an end. The effects of this desolation was to leave its mark upon the social and religious life of Tidewater for a long time to come. It was during this campaign that Zion Methodist Church on the York-Warwick Circuit was destroyed.

The account given above is verified in the following manner by Reverend Cyrus B. James in his diary: "1862. More than two hundred thousand soldiers landed in this County in April and spread destruction and desolation through the country killing livestock and fowls."



Chapter Six

Reconstruction

Tabernacle Methodist Church in Poquoson escaped the ravage of the Union Army and was host for the first Quarterly Conference held after the War between the States on 17th of March 1866. Zion Methodist Church did not escape, and plans were made at this conference for the re-building of Zion in Crab Neck.

The reconstruction of the area in the York Circuit was more of an economic problem than a religious one. Methodism which had come to the rescue in the years following the Revolutionary War also served its purpose in the religious reconstruction of the area immediately after the Civil War. No time was lost in putting the Church in order. As the following brief statistical report will show, Methodism began to flourish anew in Tabernacle and other Churches on the Circuit:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Before Civil War</u>		<u>After Civil War</u>		
	1856	1861	1866	1869	1873
No. of Sabbath Schools	3	3	3	6	5
No. of Officers & Teachers	25	28	44	48	77
No. of Scholars	86	170	170	310	384

The same growth was apparent in all Methodism during this period of reconstruction. Also a series of reforms were inaugurated such as --

(a) The abolishment of the rule of a six-month probation period of new members. The Methodists had always believed that worldly-minded material cannot build up a spiritual house; privileges lightly bestowed are lightly esteemed, therefore, new members were received into full membership upon examination by the preacher-in-charge.

(b) The 2 year term of a pastor serving one congregation was extended to a 4 year term.

(c) District conferences were adopted in 1870.

However, the greatest attempt at reconstruction so far as the Methodist Church was concerned, was the re-unification of the Church as a whole. The first real progress of uniting the Methodist Church South and the other Methodist Churches was at Baltimore in 1876 at which time a pamphlet was to be published setting forth the proceedings and results of the Commission appointed to review the Plan of Separation. This pamphlet has been referred to as the "charter of fraternity, the declaration of Christian fellowship, the constitution of peace".* This was the beginning of the movement of the two factions of the Methodist Church to re-unite which ultimately came to pass.

Again, after thirty years of discord, division, war and strife, the power of Methodism re-asserted itself. The hearts of these men who had seen and suffered so much were warmed even in the coldest of times. These men set about immediately to lay the foundations of the re-unification of their beloved Church. This love and devotion demonstrated again the power of Heavenly Grace to make all crooked things straight and all rough places plain. This story urges us never to question the power of our Church nor to lessen our allegiance to her Cause.

* Illustrated History of Methodism. Rev. W. H. Danies A.M. p 649

Chapter 7

Closing Years of York Circuit 1879 - 1902

As the conference year 1879-80 became history, it was noted that the church facilities were adequate. Every church had a Sunday School and the York Circuit owned a good parsonage in Cockletown. The people were meeting the financial obligations of their churches and the spiritual condition was promising and hopeful. Thus, growth was everywhere apparent in the churches of the York Circuit.

The conference sent Rev. J. S. Morris in the fall of 1883 to serve the York Circuit. Before he held the first Quarterly Conference (Feb. 2, 1884), disaster had struck. Tabernacle Church was burned on Christmas Eve, 1883. Immediately, plans were made for rebuilding the Church. It was decided by the trustees and other members of the official board to change the location of the Church. F. W. Carmines donated the lot where the present church is located. A new one-room, frame building was built on the new lot.

At the Third Quarterly Conference held at Zion Church, June 30, 1884, it was "Resolved that the trustees of the Old Tabernacle Church are hereby authorized to sell the old church lot and invest the proceeds in the new Church, now building." They adjourned to meet next quarter "at the new Tabernacle." The new Tabernacle was dedicated August 24, 1884, by the Presiding Elder, Rev. W. E. Judkins.

When the Fourth Quarterly Conference met August 25 at Tabernacle Church, the trustees reported a new church just finished and worth \$2,000.00.

The minutes of the Fourth Quarterly Conference for the year 1884-85 held September 5, 1885, at Tabernacle, give a detailed account of the York Circuit. It was recorded that there were four organized societies (churches); two local preachers; 769 white members, and one colored member. Nine adults and 50 infants were baptized during the year. Five members were added to the roll by certificate, and 68 on profession of faith, making a net increase of 40.

The Rev. Charles T. Taylor was appointed as pastor of the York Circuit in the fall of 1886. He served the full period of four years and was quite popular with his members and also with his Virginia Conference associates. The work was well organized. All of the church buildings and the parsonage were in good repair. It was a time of growth on the York Circuit.

As the churches grew, and the field of service broadened, steps were taken to divide the circuit into two parts. While this did not take place for some years, committees were appointed from time to time in the different churches and in the Quarterly Conferences to help bring about a division.

When the Rev. L. P. Phaup became pastor of the circuit the membership had grown to 1,017 and continued to enlarge under his leadership.

Rev. J. H. Nicholson in 1901-02 was the last pastor to serve the four churches of the York Circuit. It had recently been said that the charge could not develop its potential until it was divided. "No one man can give the attention that is necessary for development to as large a membership as there is on this circuit,

but, with the circuit divided, with the preacher immediately in contact with the people, as would then be the case, he could give his personal attention to the entire work, to an extent which is impossible now. This is about the best and only way to develop York Circuit, and lift it to a level with many other charges in the conference."

Thus, after ten years of keeping the matter before the people, York Circuit was divided into two circuits. Tabernacle and Trinity made the East York Circuit, Providence and Zion made the York Circuit, each with a full-time pastor.

This took place at the Annual Conference in the fall of 1902.

Chapter 8

East York Circuit 1902 - 1950

In 1902 the Rev. J. H. Nicholson was appointed to the East York Circuit. He served for one year and boarded in one of the houses of the community while the new parsonage was being erected.

Rev. D. J. Traynham was sent to the circuit in December 1903. His family was the first to occupy the new parsonage. He was a popular pastor and placed great emphasis on pastoral visitation and the baptism of infants and small children.

In 1907 Rev. J. E. DeShazo was appointed to the circuit and served for a period of two years.

The pastorate of the Rev. W. J. Williams is remembered for its evangelistic emphasis. At the Fourth Quarterly Conference held in 1911, he reported 119 members added to the roll on profession of faith, and 4 by certificate.

Rev. J. S. Wallace was sent to the charge in 1911 and served only one year. The church building was enlarged and completed in 1912. It was dedicated June 18 by Dr. Thomas R. Reeves.

The next pastor to serve the East York Charge was the Rev. R. N. Hartness who served for two years. He is remembered for his outstanding messages of the gospel preached each Sunday.

Dr. and Mrs. W. W. Royall, missionaries from China, were sent to the charge in 1914 and served four years. They had just returned from their mission station. A missionary spirit was created among the members of the church. The Missionary Society was reorganized by Dr. Royall. His visits to the homes of his members brought joy to everyone.

In 1918 Rev. J. R. Eggleston was appointed to serve the East York Charge and served four years, leaving in 1922. He taught in Poquoson High School while here.

The next pastor to serve the charge was the Rev. H. L. Weston who served one year, leaving in the fall of 1923.

The Rev. A. Walter Roten was pastor for the year 1923-24.

Following Mr. Roten came the Rev. W. L. Burks in 1924. A disaster struck the community soon after his arrival. The Poquoson bus was hit by a passenger train at the Hampton crossing and a number of our people were killed. Mr. Burks conducted funerals for eleven people one day and brought great comfort to the bereaved families. During his pastorate a church school building was added to the building and was dedicated in 1927 by the presiding elder, the Rev. J. J. Bradford. The annex contains an assembly room, thirteen classrooms, three halls, two restrooms, utility room, which have contributed much toward the enlargement of our church school program.

Rev. W. L. Burks was followed in 1928 by the Rev. H. L. Hastings who served for four years. He emphasized the importance of the members attending prayer meetings each week in church on Wednesday evenings. He led the services twice a month; the stewards led the other services.

Rev. Lee G. Crutchfield was sent to our circuit in 1932. Mr. Crutchfield is remembered, not only for his scholarly preaching, but for his outstanding pastoral work. He visited in the homes of every family on the East York Circuit at least once each year. At that time, the membership extended from Tabb to Messicks Point and

Amory's Wharf. He did not own a car which makes this accomplishment even more noteworthy.

Next in order was the Rev. B. E. Hudson, roommate of the Rev. L. G. Crutchfield at Randolph-Macon College. While pastor he prepared a Directory of the work of the East York Circuit. A copy was given to each family on the circuit. He served four years.

In 1939, Rev. C. A. Turner, Jr. was appointed pastor of the East York Circuit and served four years. He was a dynamic leader who inspired the membership to pay the church debt in full. Mr. Turner secured the Rev. Albert Peterson of the Billy Sunday organization to hold a Revival during his last year as pastor. Dr. Peterson led the song service and did the preaching. It was a Spiritual Feast for all who attended.

The next appointment to the circuit was the Rev. Ira Astin, serving the churches for the years 1943-47. A survey of the entire area was made under Mr. Astin's leadership to determine the possibility of dividing the East York Circuit into two stations. The Crusade for Christ was presented to our congregation by Dr. Walter C. Gum, District Superintendent. At that 11:00 service our people placed \$3,900 on the altar and several weeks later the entire goal of \$5,000 was reached. Due to Mr. Astin's fine leadership, the church paid \$6,500 for that cause.

The Rev. R. J. Yow served as pastor of the East York Circuit from 1947 through 1950. Toward the end of the conference year 1949-50 there was much discussion concerning the division of the

circuit. At the Fourth Quarterly Conference of that year, held at Trinity Church with Dr. Frank L. Wells, District Superintendent presiding, the members voted to make each church a station.

Tabernacle Church bought Trinity's interest in the parsonage for the new pastor.

Chapter 9

Tabernacle Sunday School 1852 - 1967

Tabernacle Sunday School was first organized and conducted in the old church which was located on the property now owned by the heirs of the late Dr. E. P. White.

All classes assembled in one room at 10 o'clock each Sunday. John Montgomery was the first Superintendent. His Christian life and loyalty to his church was worthy of example for his scholars to follow. He came in contact with teachers and pupils and as a shepherd saw that they were properly trained in the work of the Lord.

In 1871, he moved to Richmond and Willis Wilson was elected Superintendent. His plans for carrying on the good work were most progressive. A reward card was presented each pupil each Sunday in the month for attendance and punctuality. There was great competition among the children to see who would have learned the short passage of scripture on each card and have accumulated the largest number of cards at the end of the year. Children's Day was observed, entertaining the older people with recitations, dialogues, and songs.

R. C. Hunt was elected Secretary and served 66 years. F. W. Carmines was Treasurer and served 40 years.

There were four Sunday Schools on the York Charge. The Reverend R. N. Crooks, pastor, offered a library to the school having the largest number present and on time each Sunday in the year. Tabernacle School won the award. An old fashioned picnic

was held each summer. All four Sunday Schools participated, each presenting a program, and the awards were presented to the schools. He emphasized the importance of attendance at Sunday School and taught the children the importance of attending the preaching services.

In 1876, Wise White was elected Superintendent. His teachers were faithful and devoted to their work. A member from each class appeared on the program, reciting from memory a short chapter from the Bible, the Beatitudes, the Ten Commandments, or poetry. The Church was destroyed by fire in 1883, destroying all of its contents including all of the Sunday School literature.

In 1884, the Church School was reorganized in the first church built at the present location. Wise White was Superintendent and continued to labor earnestly and efficiently to promote the welfare of the school.

The year 1885 opened with George Hopkins as Superintendent. He was a consecrated Christian leader and worked faithfully in the school.

W. F. White was the new Superintendent beginning in 1887. He carried forward the work, which had begun by his predecessors.

In 1888, he resigned to enter Randolph Macon College and his father, Wise White, was elected to succeed him.

J. Samuel Phillips was the new Superintendent beginning with 1891. He had great musical talent and the importance of good music was emphasized in the school. He taught the children to sing, also organized a choir to lead, and group singing was enjoyed by all each Sunday morning. The first organ was purchased and used in the

Sunday School in 1893. Mrs. Blanche Watkins Moore, Mrs. Olive Lawson Freeman, and Mrs. Winnie Lawson Amory were the first organists.

Jeff Rowe was Superintendent in 1893. An interesting feature of his work was having the roll called each Sunday and teachers and pupils answering with a verse of scripture. He moved to Hampton in 1898.

Wallie Smith succeeded him and was Superintendent for 28 years, absent only three times on account of illness and death in his family. He was progressive and had the work of the school on his heart. His Christian life, his personal touch helped his scholars to live nearer the Master and everyone with whom he came in contact could see Christ in his life. The school increased each year in membership. There were very few people in the Tabernacle community, from infants through adult age, who were not enrolled in some class, Cradle Roll and Home Department. He had interesting programs each Sunday. He liked to sing and had special music each service. Mrs. Carrie White Moore served the Church and Church School as organist and pianist, also teacher in the Church School for 40 years. W. B. Cox was elected Treasurer and served 30 years. There were four young men, who were taught in classes in the Church School, entered the ministry and became members of the Virginia Conference. Three of them are still active in the ministry; the fourth has passed to his reward. The fourth Sunday in each month, a missionary program was presented by a different leader. All of the offering contributed was for missions. The School was very active in the State and County Sunday School

associations, having a larger group in attendance at each meeting. Wallie Smith's greatest work was trying to save the souls of his scholars and his personal work was an inspiration to his pastors. When he left the school and entered the gates of Glory, his going was the Church's loss but Heaven's gain.

Assistant Superintendent E. T. Freeman, Sr. was appointed to succeed him and was elected at the Fourth Quarterly Conference in 1926. He served three years. The new Sunday School Annex was built and the school reorganized into Departments. Each department had charge of the devotional exercises one Sunday in each month. He was Church Choir Director and liked to sing, taught the school to sing the beautiful songs which have been remembered through the years.

The year 1929 opened with Traynham Topping Superintendent. The certificate and pin system was used for attendance. He went forward with a great work in such a short time. He resigned and joined the Virginia Conference as a minister.

Ruxx Carmines succeeded him and carried forward the good work begun by his predecessors.

Joe Holloway served the Church School faithfully and the school grew numerically and spiritually each year.

J. T. Amory, Jr. was Superintendent from 1939 to 1947. He emphasized the work of the Training School for teachers. His teachers cooperated by attending each session each year. This had benefited the church and church school.

Talmadge Watkins served as Superintendent from 1947 to 1952. During his term the school grew in number and progressed in all phases of work.

In 1952 Ruxx Carmines was elected Superintendent and served until 1962. A lot was purchased adjoining the church property and a new Church School Annex was erected. This annex contains a Fellowship Hall, a modern kitchen, seven classrooms, two halls, two restrooms, which has contributed much toward the enlargement of the church school program. The attendance and offering increased each year. He moved from the community and helped to organize a new church and church school. Tabernacle Church School rejoiced with him in his new church.

John E. Hunt was elected as Superintendent in 1961 and served five years. The largest church school offering for any Sunday to date (\$129.44) was contributed one Sunday in March, 1966.

Wilson Watkins was elected as Superintendent in 1966 and served one year. Many Christian families moved into our community and joined our church school and are taking an active part in the work.

Charles Drummond, the present Superintendent, was elected in 1967. Edwin Hunt was elected secretary and Linwood Burcher was elected treasurer in 1942, and they are serving faithfully.

There are 529 members enrolled. The church school continues to increase in attendance and more interest is shown than ever before.

Chapter 10

Organizations and Societies of Tabernacle Church

This chapter is devoted to the different organizations that have been connected directly or indirectly with our church. A church is an organization within itself but it is composed of other organizations which help to carry on its work. Some of these are explained in brief as follows:

The first Woman's Missionary Society on the Peninsula was organized at Tabernacle Church in 1880, with Mrs. Elizabeth White the first president. A granddaughter, Mrs. Carrie White Moore, was the first president of the Woman's Society of Christian Service.

The reorganization of the Tabernacle Woman's Missionary Society was in February 1916. Dr. W. W. Royall, pastor, was assisted by Mrs. Henry Forrest, president of Trinity Missionary Society. There were enrolled eight members including the officers who were as follows: Mrs. Martha L. Holloway, President; Mrs. E. M. Freeman, Vice President; Mrs. A. B. Phillips, Secretary; Mrs. Carroll L. Moore, Corresponding Secretary; Mrs. P. K. Hunt, Treasurer; Mrs. J. T. Amory; Mrs. W. B. Forrest; and Mrs. Hildred Garner.

In ten years the auxiliary grew in membership from eight to seventy members. The first years only a small amount of money was raised. During the Centenary Campaign, \$1,000 was contributed by the Society. Contributions were made to the work in China; Miss Lowder, a nurse in Korea; Ferrum School, The Wilson Home for Girls, Richmond, Virginia; and The Methodist Orphanage. Our personal

service work has brought us in closer touch with humanity. Homes and hospitals have been visited, flowers and fruit have been taken to the sick and words of encouragement to those in distress. The local work helped maintain the parsonage and carry forward the program of the church.

Rally Day services are held in one of the churches each year. One of the societies entertains the other two societies with a missionary program, speakers, special music, and lunch. These Rally Days have brought the three missionary societies closer together spiritually and socially.

The members attend the circle meetings each month. The president of each circle teaches the Bible Study Course; also a Mission Study Book is taught during the year.

In September 1940 throughout Methodism the Missionary Society and the Ladies Aid (local work) were combined into one organization and became known as "The Woman's Society of Christian Service." Mrs. Carroll L. Moore was the first president. Mrs. J. A. Topping was the first president of the Wesleyan Service Guild.

A life membership pin and certificate have been presented to each president and charter member of the society.

The missionary members have helped to support a doctor in the Congo and a nurse in India. The local work consisted of furnishing venetian blinds in the Fellowship Hall; a set of china and silverware were presented to the kitchen of the church.

The officers for 1967 are as follows: Mrs. Herbert Martin, President; Mrs. Edwin Hunt, Vice President; Mrs. Herbert Freeman, Secretary; Mrs. J. Frank Hunt, Jr., Treasurer. The Secretaries

of lines of work are as follows: Campus Ministry - Mrs. May Carmines; Christian Social Relations - Mrs. Donald Brushwood; Membership Cultivation - Mrs. Eugene Dieter; Missionary Education and Service - Mrs. Cedric Insley; Program Materials - Mrs. Kelsor Hunt; Spiritual Life Cultivation - Mrs. Fenler McMillan; Supply Work - Mrs. Harvey Austin; Local Church Activities - Mrs. Linwood Burcher.

The following ladies have served as president of Woman's Missionary Society and Woman's Society of Christian Service; Mrs. Martha L. Holloway, Mrs. H. C. Carmines, Mrs. H. J. Phillips, Mrs. Carroll L. Moore, Mrs. Linwood Burcher, Mrs. Vaden Carmines, Mrs. P. R. Carmines, Mrs. Edwin Hunt, Mrs. M. T. Walters, Mrs. Margaret Holloway, Mrs. Fenler McMillan, Mrs. Cedric Insley, and Mrs. Herbert Martin.

The society has and still is doing much good work in our church and community. The purpose of the Woman's Society of Christian Service is to unite all the women of the church in Christian living and service; to help develop and support Christian work among women and children around the world; to take part in such service activities as will strengthen the local church, improve civic, community, and world conditions; to develop the spiritual life; to study the needs of the world. To this end this organization shall seek to enlist women, young people, and children in this Christian fellowship and to secure funds for the activities in the local church and support of the work undertaken at home and abroad for the establishment of a World Christian Community.

The present enrollment of this Society and Guild is 89.

The goal, for which the members are working and praying, is that every woman of the church will become a member of the Woman's Society of Christian Service.

"Rosebud Society" - In 1904 during the pastorate of Rev. D. J. Traynham, the Rosebud Missionary Society was organized. P. R. Carmines was president and Carrie White was secretary. The children and youth of the church were members. Mrs. W. H. Traynham had charge of the programs. The gifts of the Rosebuds for missions were sent to "Uncle Larry" and the value of the missionary education for the boys and girls to the church of the future cannot be estimated. Later due to change in the organization of the missionary work, the Rosebud Society came to an end.

Epworth League - Youth Fellowship (M.Y.F.). - The first Epworth League was organized by the Rev. D. J. Traynham with Misses Hillie Carmines, Carrie Lawson, and Lounetta Smith as officers. All of the young people in the community attended these Sunday evening services and became members through the years. They sent delegates each year to the Epworth League Conference. There were Sub-District Meetings each month and Rally Day each year.

In 1933 the Epworth League became known as "Methodist Youth Fellowship." There are two groups in our church. Mrs. Benjamin Freeman is the present Youth Counselor and Miss Rose White is President of the Senior group. Mrs. Robert Forrest is Counselor for the Junior group. Gerald Hopkins is President of this group.

More emphasis is placed on the "Youth" of the church now than ever before since they will be the church of the future. The youth of our church were leaders in a Revival in the church. The principal address each evening was delivered by Rev. C. P. Minnick, minister of the Williamsburg Methodist Church. Ten young people attended the Massanetta Bible Conference at Harrisonburg, as a means for inspiration. It was a real Spiritual Feast for all who attended.

"Woman's Christian Temperance Union" - The W.C.T.U., as it is commonly known, does not have a separate organization in each church but is an interdenominational organization. The local unit was organized in 1922 at Tabernacle Church by Mrs. Hillie Phillips. Mrs. Emily Smith was the first president. The W.C.T.U. consists of Active and Honorary members, each signing a temperance pledge before becoming a member. The dues are \$1.00 per year. Sixty cents of this amount goes for State Temperance work and 40 cents for local work. There are 110 active members, and 27 honorary members in the Poquoson W.C.T.U.

There are two junior organizations, the Y.T.C., "Youth Temperance Council," and the L.T.L., "Loyal Temperance Legion." Mrs. Herbert Martin is the Counselor of the L.T.L. Mrs. Sammie Tucker is Counselor for Y.T.C. The members visit Patrick Henry Hospital and have a service for the patients and serve them refreshments. They visit Veteran's Hospital in Hampton and take them Cheer packages.

The W.C.T.U. and its junior organizations have done much for the cause of Temperance. The influence of these organizations is widespread, reaching both the old and the young.

Chapter 11

Tabernacle Church 1950 - 1967

Rev. O. B. Carter served as the first full-time pastor of Tabernacle Church from 1950-52. The church was redecorated and an electronic organ was installed during his pastorate.

The next pastor to serve the church was the Rev. Edward D. Garris, serving from 1952-55. A Junior Church was organized during this time. These boys and girls assemble in the sanctuary for the 11:00 A.M. service each Sunday. They leave at the appointed time and go to the assembly hall in the Educational Building to complete their worship and study. The Junior Church is sponsored by the Wesleyan Service Guild and is directed by Mr. Joseph A. Topping. It is an important part of the church program.

Rev. R. Augustus Craig succeeded the Rev. Edward D. Garris and served the years 1955-58. Many improvements were made during his pastorate. The new Educational Building was erected on the lot next to the church.

In September 1958 Rev. R. Augustus Craig was transferred to his home church, Central Methodist Church, Portsmouth, Va., where he desired to serve the last pastorate of his ministry. A vacancy had just occurred in that church.

Rev. Earl R. Collie was appointed to succeed Mr. Craig. He led the church in a tithing campaign which has continued to increase giving to the total financial program of the church.

In June 1961 Rev. C. Reginald Walton became pastor of our church. Immediately, plans were made to build a new parsonage. A

lot was purchased near the church from Mrs. Sadie C. Hunt. Upon completion of a beautiful house in 1962, it was completely furnished and ready for the parsonage family. Shortly thereafter, the church had a Homecoming with Open House in the afternoon under the direction of the Wesleyan Service Guild. Under Mr. Walton's leadership, our church was also one of the higher ranking churches of the Conference in contributing to the Christian Higher Education Campaign.

After the new parsonage was completed the old parsonage property was sold to J. T. Amory, Jr.

Rev. C. Reginald Walton served our church five years and is the only pastor in the history of the church to have this honor.

In 1965 the church purchased three lots across the street from the church for use as a parking lot. The house and lot next door to the church were purchased at the same time. The house is being used for the pastor's study, church office, and library.

The Rev. Claude F. Moseley was sent to the church in 1966 and is serving his second year. He has invited some of the noted speakers of our conference to address our congregation.

The church has sent out four preachers of the Gospel: Rev. W. Carroll Freeman, D.D.; the Rev. C. Traynham Topping; the Rev. R. Beverly Watkins; and the late Rev. E. H. Hopkins. The church has had one local preacher, the Rev. L. P. Topping, who served faithfully for many years.

We should be forever grateful to those who have carried on the work of the church and church school through the years. Many have passed on to their reward. There are many in our church today who deserve much credit for their faithfulness and loyalty.

We have been very fortunate in having so many churchgoing people move into our community in the past few years. Many of these have joined our church by transfer from other Methodist churches and also from other denominations. They are taking an active part in the total program of our church.

Many changes and improvements have taken place during the past century and a half, and we pray that our church may continue to grow in spirit, in numbers, and in faith in God.

Tabernacle Church is our heritage. We should cherish it and worship in it.

Tabernacle Church! A name most dear,
A name which many are pleased to hear;
A sacred place dedicated to God
Where people gather to worship the Lord;
Are taught to practice the "Golden Rule".
Memory goes back to childhood days
When we joined in singing the songs of praise
And listened to teachers who tried to impress
Upon our young minds what brings happiness.
Changes take place as the years go by
The young grow up, the older ones die;
The work goes on from year to year
By those to whom God's cause is dear.
May God's richest blessing on people and church
Abide, while the people continue to search
The Scriptures for help as time passes by,
"For of Me," said the Master, "they testify."

APPENDIX I

Early Ministers who served at Tabernacle as a part
of the Williamsburg Circuit 1817-1832

1817	Thacker Murie B. Stephens	1825	John Kerr Richard D. Merriwether
1818	Jacob Hill Exum Chapman	1826	James Morrison
1819	Joshua Featherston	1827	William W. M'Clun
1820	George M. Anderson	1828	Hezekiah G. Leigh, Elder Christopher Thomas, Min. Vernon Eskridge, Min.
1821	Francis A. Ward	1829	William S. Peyton Robert I. Carson
1822	Waddell Johnson	1830	S. Harroll D. Wood
1823	Payton Anderson, Elder Robert Wilkinson, Min.	1831	George A. Bain James A. Brown William S. Peyton
1824	John F. Andrew	1832	Henry Alley Benjamin Watson

APPENDIX II

Ministers who served at Tabernacle as part of the
Hampton Circuit 1833-1842

1833	George Mahood	1838	James D. Coulling
1834	Jervis M. Keessee John T. St. Clair	1839	James D. Coulling
1835	J. P. Davidson	1840	Jacob Mannin Reuben Jones
1836	W.H. Kelley	1841	Jacob Manning H. H. Garey
1837	James W. Honeycutt	1842	Joseph Lear James Clarke

APPENDIX III

Ministers who served at Tabernacle as part of the
York and Warwick Circuit 1843-1851

1843	James B. L. Williams
1844	Humphrey Billups
1845	Benjamin F. Woodward The records now become of the "Methodist Episcopal Church, South."
1846	William Lee
1847	G., W. Andrews
1848	John S. Briggs
1849	John S. Briggs
1850	George W. Trimyer
1851	George W. Trimyer

APPENDIX IV

Presiding Elders and Preachers in Charge who Served Tabernacle as a part of the York and Warwick Circuit 1852-1878

From The Quarterly Conference Record Book of the York-Warwick Circuit

<u>Year</u>	<u>Presiding Elder</u>	<u>Preacher in Charge</u>
1852	Robert Jacob Manning	George W. Trimyer
1853	Robert Jacob Manning	William A. Robinson
1854	Thomas C. Hayes	William A. Robinson
1855	Leonidas Rosser	David H. Laney
1856	Leonidas Rosser	Humphry Billups
1857	Thomas C. Hayes	Alexander M. Hall
1858	David Seth Dogget	James E. Joiner
1859	David Seth Dogget	William A. Robinson
1860	David Seth Dogget	Alexander M. Hall
1861	David Seth Dogget	B. T. Ames
1862-1865	A blank sheet appears in the Minutes Book.	
1866	Leonidas Rosser	R. N. Crooks
1867	Leonidas Rosser	R. N. Crooks
1868	Leonidas Rosser	R. N. Crooks
1869	D. P. Wills	J. D. Lumsden
1870	D. P. Wills	J. D. Lumsden
1871	A. B. Brown	Joseph Lear
1872	P. A. Peterson	R. N. Crooks
1873	P. A. Peterson	R. N. Crooks
1874	P. A. Peterson	R. N. Crooks
1875	P. A. Peterson	R. N. Crooks
1876	P. A. Peterson	B. C. Spiller
1877	Lemuel Sutton Read	B. C. Spiller
1878	Lemuel Sutton Read	B. C. Spiller

APPENDIX V

Pastors who served Tabernacle from 1879 to 1966

1879-82	J. T. Dolby	1918-22	J. R. Eggleston
1882-83	J. H. Crown	1922-23	H. L. Weston
1883-84	J. S. Morris	1923-24	A. W. Roten
1884-86	James McSparan	1924-28	W. L. Burks
1886-90	Charles Taylor	1928-32	H. L. Hastings
1890-94	J. E. Potts	1932-35	L. G. Crutchfield
1894-97	C. E. Hobday	1935-39	B. E. Hudson
1897-98	J. S. Wallace	1939-43	C. A. Turner, Jr.
1898-1901	L. J. Phaup	1943-47	Ira Astin
1901-03	J. W. Nicholson	1947-50	R. J. Yow
1903-07	D. J. Traynham	1950-52	O. B. Carter
1907-09	J. E. DeShazo	1952-55	E. D. Carris
1909-11	W. J. Williams	1955-58	R. A. Craig
1911-12	J. S. Wallace	1958-61	E. R. Collie
1912-14	R. N. Hartness	1961-66	C. R. Walton
1914-18	W. W. Royall	1966-	C. F. Moseley

APPENDIX VI

Presiding Elders and District Superintendents who served the Circuits and Districts. The exact years of service are not known.

Joseph H. Proctor
L. S. Read
W. E. Judkins
Joseph Amiss
Paul Whitehead
R. T. wilson
A. F. Brown
J. Powell Garland
R. H. Bennett
W. V. Tudor
E. H. Rawlins
Findlay Gayle
Geo. W. Jones

T. McN. Simpson
J. J. Bradford
J. D. Hank
Geo. W. Jones
R. H. Potts
J. T. Boswain
W. Archer Wright
Thomas F. Carroll
Walter C. Gum
Frank L. Wells
Edgar A. Potts
Kenneth Haddock
William P. Watkins
R. Oman Bryant
W. Douglas Newman